



FEMA

Redlands Fire Demonstration Garden Fire-Resistant Landscaping

Redlands, CA - Residents of the urban-wildland interface, an area encompassing more than a third of the City of Redlands, have a place to go where they can learn how to modify vegetation at their homes and use fire-resistant materials to make their homes fire safe. Since 1992, Redlands has participated in disaster recovery efforts related to seven different Federally declared disasters, including five major floods, an earthquake, and a wildland fire.

Bolstered by grants from FEMA and the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) totaling more than \$217,000, the city of 60,000 residents implemented a three-fold plan to reduce the menacing impact of natural disasters. Included in the plan is a fire demonstration garden, one of five in California that graphically and three-dimensionally shows how defensible space landscaping around structures in an urban-wildland interface area can save homes. The Redlands Fire Demonstration Garden is the result of a partnership between public agencies and private businesses and is designed to show homeowners how fire-resistant landscaping may help save their homes in a wildfire while also helping to lessen or prevent erosion.

Donations of materials and labor from private businesses to establish the garden was combined with the \$67,000 of the total Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) grant.

Garden exhibits include a model home constructed of ignition-resistant materials and recommended fire-resistant plant materials. Handouts showing examples of cost-effective and fire-safe principles in home design and construction are made available to visitors who can follow a winding pathway through the garden, which features a four-zone planting strategy that involves a variety of fire-resistant plants. Exterior walls and the roof of the model home demonstrate mitigation measures, including fireproof roofing and siding materials, spark arrestors, screens designed to keep flying embers from entering structures, and hardening of eaves with fireproof materials. "Bird stops" are added to the ends of the tiles, to demonstrate effectively preventing the birds from stuffing combustible materials in the roof. The garden also illustrates how to create "defensible space" around structures—space where firefighters can fight fires more safely while protecting homes.

Many people in the fire-risk areas of Redlands have used the garden as a model, taking home the ideas shown there and making their homes fire safe. Through the City's Firesafe 2000 program, funded by a separate \$150,000 FEMA/OES mitigation grant, the city provided funds for 38 single-family dwellings and a separate 10-home project. Homeowners each received \$3,000 to pay for getting rid of excess and fire-prone vegetation, and for installing irrigation systems and revegetation with fire-safe plants, in a program administered and monitored by Temby.

Vegetation shown is not specific just to Redlands, but types of plants that could be incorporated into fire-safe revegetation anywhere in Southern California. "People find out that fire plantings don't have to be ugly," said Temby.



San Bernardino County,
California



Quick Facts

Sector:

Public

Cost:

\$67,000.00 (Estimated)

Primary Activity/Project:

Education/Outreach/Public Awareness

Primary Funding:

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)